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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses business conditions in the Ukraine, outlines the development of the Ukrainian language, and describes a course designed to teach business persons how to speak and read basic Ukrainian in a short period of time. The course, "Speak and Read Essential Ukrainian I," consists of 30 lessons, each of which centers on a 30-minute recorded dialog that calls for students responses and interaction. An instructor helps the students with pronunciation, explains basic grammar, reviews previously introduced material, and gradually introduces the written language. Learners will become familiar with nearly 400 words and be able to conduct simple conversations and business transactions, read signs and schedules, and gain some insight into Ukrainian culture. (MDM)

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UKRAINIAN FOR BUSINESS

by

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After the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991, a new country appeared on the map of the world - Ukraine, one of the richest former Soviet republics.

Ukraine is becoming a business partner of the USA, for it is a prospective market where a lot business products can be sold and bought. Knowledge of the Ukrainian language, as well as knowledge of its traditions and culture, will be very important when dealing with Ukraine.

Ukraine is situated in the southern European portion of the former Soviet Union. It borders with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and the former Soviet Republics of Belorussia, Russia and Moldovia. It has a population of about 53 million people, 3 million of which live in its capital, Kiev, the cradle of Russian culture.

Ukraine is a highly developed country both industrially and agriculturally and has high potential because of its huge stock of mineral resources and the productivity of its soil.

The industry of Ukraine is grounded on a huge fuel-energetic base. Around the Ukrainian city of Donetsk is one of Europe's largest coal basins, and hundreds of hydro-electrical stations operate in the country.

The main industry in Ukraine is iron ore production, but as scientists say, Ukraine has all the elements of the periodic table in its earth. Ukrainian agriculture thrives. Before the fall of the Soviet Union, it was well-known as the bread basket of the USSR.

The Ukrainian language belongs to the East Slavic group of languages and is written in Cyrillic characters. Ukrainian is closely related to Russian and Belorussian, from which it was indistinguishable until the 12th or 13th century. Besides the similarity of languages, Ukrainians and Russians also share a heritage in Kiev where Christianity first took root in this part of the world. But these Slavic brothers went different ways, and the Ukrainian language developed characteristics separate from Russian.

After the fall of the great state of Kievan Rus in the 13th century, the Ukrainian dialectal characteristic became very marked, but it was not until the end of the 18th century when the modern literary Ukrainian language emerged. The language also contains a large number of words borrowed from Polish but has fewer borrowings from Church Slavonic than does Russian.

There is a long-term discussion in academic circles whether Ukrainian is a separate language or simply a variation of Russian. The last point of view was shared by such prominent minds as Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov. Not until 1905 did the Russian Academy of Sciences concede that Ukrainian was indeed a separate language.

The Ukrainian language was engaged in a fierce battle to win recognition and its right for existence. For example, in 1863 and 1871, all publications in Ukrainian were prohibited in czarist Russia. The entire Ukrainian literary process in the 19th century occurred under official and unofficial Russian disfavour. The battle for a distinct national language reflected the rapid development of the Ukrainian national consciousness. Even today

nationalistic feelings are of paramount importance to many Ukrainians. So, even though Ukrainian business partners may read and speak Russian, their nationalistic consciousness will be honored if they are addressed in Ukrainian. It becomes not an issue of linguistic discussion or communicative ability, but rather an important issue of national dignity.

The course "Speak and Read Essential Ukrainian I" was designed by Dr. Gerard L. Ervin, Dr. Mara Sukholutskaya, and Heinle and Heinle Enterprises, Inc., to teach businessmen how to speak and read the elementary concepts of the language in a short time. The course consists of 30 recorded lessons. During each half-hour lesson students will converse with two instructors on the recording in the language spoken by educated Ukrainian citizens in their everyday business and social life.

The program's unique method for presenting dialogues, developed by Dr. Paul Pimsleur, relieves learners of several common learning problems. Dr. Pimsleur's system is based on two key principles, "Anticipation" and "Graduated Interval Recall," a scientific principle of memory (75). "Speak and Read Essential Ukrainian I" incorporates both of those principles to provide students with the simplest, most effective learning system.

The learners are not pushed to memorize vocabulary lists or learn grammar rules, and there is no written homework. Instead, an experienced language teacher guides them smoothly along in English. The instructor helps with pronunciation, explains basic grammar techniques, reviews previously introduced material and gradually

introduces the written language. By following the tutor's instructions and by joining in the simulated conversation, students soon learn to speak, read, and understand a new language.

Everything the student needs for the course are the audio tapes and the reading and grammar material. The lexical material of the course (basic words, sentences and phrases) has been selected from a perspective to enable learners to use the language most effectively in everyday situations in Ukraine. This lexical material includes approximately 400 words.

Among them are:

Nouns--158

Verbs--43

Adjectives--30

Adverbs--31

Pronouns--12

Numbers--40

Conjunctions, prepositions, particles--40

The course also includes about 30 proper nouns--the names of the main cities, streets in the capital of Kiev, subway stations, churches, theaters and museums, as well as prominent writers and film directors popular in Ukraine. Despite rapid and continuous changes which are taking place in the country, we strove to make the course as accurate as possible.

All parts of speech are present in the course so learners are

provided with sufficient language material to communicate at the elementary level. According to Dr. W. Bukhbinder, a prominent Soviet linguist and language educator, the language material will bring the learners to the "minimum-communication level of mastering" the language (67).

Learners will be able to converse with native speakers in hotels, restaurants and shops and to use transportation and phone systems in their visits to Ukraine. They will also be able to get themselves groceries at a store if necessary, to buy souvenirs, and to answer any questions about their documents to Customs. The provided language material will make it possible for them to give information about themselves, family, home and friends. This knowledge will in turn make their relations with business partners less formal and more productive.

The language skills the students will obtain by the end of the course will enable them to participate in casual conversations, to state facts, to give instructions, to describe objects or ideas and to speak about activities related to the present, past, and future. Most important, they will know how to ask different kinds of questions.

The course also provides instruction to recognize and comprehend the Cyrillic alphabet of the Ukrainian language, which consists of 32 letters.

Reading materials of "Speak and Read Essential Ukrainian I" have been selected to facilitate the ability of the learners to make generalizations about the specific system of Cyrillic

characters used in the Ukrainian language. Since each letter corresponds to only one sound in the Ukrainian language, the learners should be prepared to read at a higher level than he or she can speak, by the end of the complete course. In fact, the learner will be able to read every word in the Ukrainian language.

Reading materials include the names of streets and subway stations, and the content of signs which can be seen at railway stations or airports, as well as a number of other useful information. The learner will be able to read both maps and dictionaries, which are both extremely important.

Grammar patterns, described in the Grammar Section of the manual, will give students basic knowledge about the categories of nouns (gender and case) in the Ukrainian language and the main rules of capitalization. It will also acquaint them with different verb forms (conjugation, imperative, infinitive).

The number system is one of the most complicated parts of Ukrainian grammar. The learners will be introduced in a very simple way to cardinal and ordinal numbers. This will enable them to tell time and to ask for it, to understand the information about numbers of buses, streetcars, and other means of public transportation.

Grammar material is explained in comparison with the students' native tongue. This is effective because it allows students to use their previous linguistic experience to help them better comprehend the Ukrainian language.

American businessmen's desire to learn and to use the language

will indicate to the people of Ukraine sincere interest and respect for their culture. People who feel respected respond in ways that are helpful and friendly. Honoring the language and culture of your partners is the first step towards success in business.

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